



## Nevada chooses new High School Equivalency tests

On October 4<sup>th</sup> the Nevada State Board of Education approved three new high school equivalency assessments that will be used throughout Nevada starting January 1, 2014. The new tests will provide the basis for awarding a Nevada Certificate of High School Equivalency (HSE) by the Nevada Department of Education.



The Board voted to approve a new computer-based GED<sup>®</sup> test as well as two alternative assessments: the High School Equivalency Test (*HiSET*<sup>™</sup>, designed by Educational Testing Services) and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC<sup>™</sup>, from CTB/McGraw-Hill). *HiSET*<sup>™</sup> and TASC<sup>™</sup> will allow for either computer- or paper-based testing; the new GED<sup>®</sup> test will be offered only via computer, outside of correctional facilities. All three assessments cover the same content areas and allow test-takers to demonstrate proficiency in the academic skills expected by employers and postsecondary institutions.

Nevada is the first state in the nation to approve all three HSE assessments for use in awarding a state-issued Certificate of High School Equivalency. All students who pass one of the state-approved assessments will receive the same Nevada Certificate of High School Equivalency. "The State of Nevada is pleased to be at the forefront of providing options for students for high school equivalency in the United

States," said Brad Deeds, State HSE Administrator. "We now have the opportunity to provide multiple safety nets and pathways to the nearly 6,000 Nevadans who seek a state-issued Certificate of High School Equivalency each year to meet their education and work goals. The vendors will compete with one another to maintain a high standard and level of rigor, helping to keep the price affordable for Nevadans."

State-approved test centers and their local governing authorities may select which test or tests they wish to offer starting in January 2014. Most test centers are located in school districts, colleges, and community-based organizations and can now choose the assessment systems that best meet the needs of their local student populations. In order to ensure accessibility and affordability for all Nevada students, test centers must offer both a paper- and a computer-based HSE assessment. Therefore, test centers offering the GED<sup>®</sup> must also offer the TASC<sup>™</sup> and/or the *HiSET*<sup>™</sup> to ensure student access to a paper-based testing option. "Easier access to High School Equivalency testing can open the door for more people to pursue postsecondary education and training, and can boost the numbers of college degrees and technical certificates our state produces every year," said Deeds.

## Financial literacy model produces high returns

The nonprofit [National Endowment for Financial Education](http://www.nefe.org/) (NEFE, <http://www.nefe.org/>) has been examining the desirability, difficulty, and opportunities for incorporating content pertaining to personal finances into subject areas where personal finance has not usually been taught.

NEFE's research report [Content-Based Teacher Professional Development](http://nvae.us/9e) (<http://nvae.us/9e>) presents an instructional model focused on a learner-centered approach to building teachers' confidence. This initiative "emphasizes the instruction of personal finance concepts, information, and behavior so that teachers have the tools and confidence to implement positive financial management in their own lives — and then to help students do the same."

Class topics include developing strategies for personal finance management, how career planning impacts earning power, comparing and contrasting financial services and products, strategies to avoid being harmed by

# Making “evidence-based” real for workforce development

*Adapted from an article in the July 2013 issue of [NAWDP](#) Advantage.*

You’ve probably heard the term “evidence-based,” but may wonder, “What exactly does ‘evidence-based’ mean?” or “How do I get started?”

“Evidence-based” means your program’s services are informed by the most up-to-date research. You are using experts to help you measure your program’s effectiveness. And, most importantly, the people in your program are receiving care that has the best chance of improving their long-term economic, social, and emotional well-being.

This description applies to workforce development as well as to other programs. States and local areas are becoming more evidence-based because it just makes sense: we want to choose the approach that is most likely to help our customers, based on currently available information. Funding sources, such as foundations and the federal government, are increasingly requiring grant applicants to build proposed activities based on “what works.”

What can you do to become more evidence-based? Where do you start when you are not necessarily a research expert?

To begin, learn about currently available research. [Workforce System Strategies](#) (<http://strategies.workforce3one.org/>), sponsored by the Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor, is a good starting point. It provides research and implementation tools that may be useful in program design initiatives or grant applications.

It’s not enough to know what research is available because not all research is created equal. Some studies don’t focus on the right research question; some are poorly designed or not rigorously implemented. Most workforce development practitioners are not research experts, but you can learn a lot by working with others who are. Experts in research at local universities, community colleges, or research organizations can help you understand how to find and accurately interpret what is already known about serving a specific population, or which types of programs or practices have better evidence of success. They can also help you evaluate the success of your own programs.

Even with good research, you can’t be sure something that worked elsewhere will work for you. But using what you know will help you stand out within the workforce system and put you ahead of the game with what matters most: ensuring that the people served by your programs are receiving services that have the best chance of improving their long-term well-being.



**Workforce System Strategies**

**The site includes more than 350 descriptions of and links to recent workforce development research. You can search within topics such as education & training; employment, retention & advancement; management & operations. Under education & training, for example, the site drills down further within apprenticeship/workplace-based learning, basic skills/literacy/GED, credentials/competency models, curriculum development & instruction, and postsecondary/career/technical education. You can also search by methodology, target population, state, and program.**

## Financial Literacy *(Continued from page 1)*

fraud, options in using credit and managing debt, exploring personal finance resources, etc.

The model has been field-tested by more than 550 teachers in five states. Results demonstrate that participants made important changes to their personal finances and had more confidence in their ability to teach the subject. There was a sharp increase in those who integrated financial education topics into their classroom instruction.

NEFE aims to provide professional development that is standardized, effective, and adaptable to local conditions and constraints. The organization is also assessing the program for its general utility in helping teachers attain competence in incorporating personal finance content into a variety of subjects (e.g., mathematics, social studies, etc.)



NEFE collaborates with several other organizations on the Jump\$Tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy ([www.jumpstart.org](http://www.jumpstart.org)), a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the financial literacy of pre-kindergarten through college-age youth by providing advocacy, research, standards, and educational resources.

**A sure thing: Getting some college is an investment with a return that exceeds the historical return on practically any conventional investment, including stocks, bonds, and real estate.**

**— *Is Starting College and Not Finishing Really That Bad?* Greenstone and Looney, June 7, 2013**

## Teacher as student

Thanks to Gary Lyon for this reminder about the Open Learning Resources list he maintains on NVeLEARN, the State of Nevada Online Professional Development System (<https://nvelearn.nv.gov>). “Open learning resources are available from a growing number of colleges, universities, and other open-education institutions. The hallmark of these resources is free access to high quality education, a growing number of which provide paths for receiving credit.” Some examples:

- [Peer-2-Peer University - Learning by everyone, for everyone, about almost anything](#)
- [Visual Literacy: An E-Learning Tutorial on Visualization for Communication](#)
- [DigitalGov University On-Demand Training](#)
- [List of Massively Open Online Courses \(MOOC\) from top universities and other sources](#)
- [Coursera - Free College-level Courses from “Ivy-League” Schools](#)
- [Top 50 Open Courseware Collection](#)

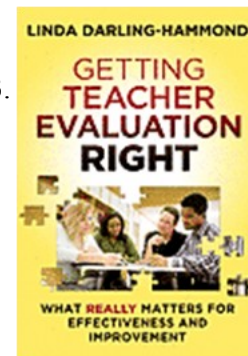
For those seeking a degree or credential, the Adult Education Degree and Credentialing Programs Portal at [www.coabe.org/portal](http://www.coabe.org/portal) can be a huge help. Applicants and graduates can find program information on higher education degree programs in adult education from across the country, write reviews, and rate what they like best about each program. Degree program coordinators can add and update information about their program offerings, feature their programs, and participate as guest discussants on topics of interest to adult education practitioners. The site is maintained by [COABE](#), in partnership with [TESOL International Association](#), the [American Institutes for Research](#), the [American Association for Adult and Continuing Education](#), the [National Adult Educational Professional Development Consortium](#), and the [Coalition of Lifelong Learning Organizations](#).

## Hard copy

***Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: What Really Matters for Effectiveness and Improvement***, by Linda Darling-Hammond, professor of education at Stanford University and NCTAF (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future) Board member, Teachers College Press, April 2013.

Teacher evaluation systems are being overhauled by states and districts across the United States. And, while intentions are admirable, the result for many new systems is that good — often excellent — teachers are lost in the process. In the end, students are the losers.

In her new book, Linda Darling-Hammond makes a compelling case for a research-based approach to teacher evaluation that supports collaborative models of teacher planning and learning. She outlines the most current research informing evaluation of teaching practice that incorporates evidence of what teachers do and what their students learn. In addition, she examines the harmful consequences of using any single student test as a basis for evaluating individual teachers. Finally, Darling-Hammond offers a vision of teacher evaluation as part of a teaching and learning system that supports continuous improvement, both for individual teachers and for the profession as a whole.



***Welcome to the United States: A Guidebook for Refugees—English***, Center for Applied Linguistics, 2012.

This widely-used resource has been updated to feature currently arriving refugee populations and includes relevant case studies and additional testimonials from refugees and service providers. In addition, this edition includes many worksheets and activities designed to provide an interactive way of learning about resettlement in the United States. Order online from the CAL store (<http://calstore.cal.org/store/default.aspx>).


***Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism***, by Colin Baker, Multilingual Matters, 2011.

The fifth edition of this bestselling book provides a comprehensive introduction to bilingualism and bilingual education. In a compact and clear style, its 19 chapters cover all the crucial issues in bilingualism at individual, group, and national levels. Order online from the CAL store (<http://calstore.cal.org/store/default.aspx>).

Editor: Sharyn Yanoshak	<a href="mailto:saylv@cox.net">saylv@cox.net</a>
Phone: 702/253-6280	Fax: 702/433-5293
Back issues archived at:	<a href="http://nvedu.org/nc">http://nvedu.org/nc</a>
Direct address changes to:	<a href="mailto:adriurquilla1@hotmail.com">adriurquilla1@hotmail.com</a>

**The truth is, if you want a decent job that will lead to a decent life today *you* have to work harder, regularly reinvent yourself, obtain at least some form of postsecondary education, make sure that you're engaged in lifelong learning and play by the rules. That's not a bumper sticker, but we terribly mislead people by saying otherwise.**  
—Thomas Friedman, “New Rules,” *New York Times* 9/8/12

Community Multicultural Center  
2215A Renaissance Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89119



Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Las Vegas, NV  
Permit No. 76

This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

## What works: this bridge is in great shape

MDRC partnered with LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY) to launch a small but rigorous study of its GED Bridge to Health and Business program, which aims to prepare students not only to pass the GED® exam, but also to continue on to college and training programs. According to the report [Enhancing GED Instruction to Prepare Students for College and Careers](http://nvae.us/91) (<http://nvae.us/91>), the results are highly encouraging: Bridge students were far more likely to complete the class, pass the GED exam, and enroll in college than students in a more traditional GED preparation class.

In the context of this study, it is impossible to isolate any single component or combination of components as the critical pieces in the Bridge program's apparent success. But numerous visits to the program by MDRC researchers between fall 2010 and spring 2012 — including interviews with staff members, observations of classroom and counseling activities, and focus group discussions with students in both Bridge and Prep — yielded a few key findings about how the staff implemented the Bridge model and how students in both Bridge and Prep felt about their experiences. It is likely that at least some of the results can be traced to these findings.

- ✓ Original materials and lesson plans in the Bridge course employed critical thinking skills and emphasized core concepts from the fields of business and health care.
- ✓ Bridge students benefited from full-time, consistent, qualified program staff and additional in-class hours.
- ✓ Postsecondary transition advisement was well incorporated into the student experience. Bridge students had regular meetings with a transitions adviser and were more aware of requirements to enter college and training programs than Prep students.
- ✓ Overall, Bridge students appeared more engaged in the classroom and more encouraged by the program experience.



MDRC ([www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org)) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization committed to finding solutions to some of the most difficult problems facing the nation, from reducing poverty and bolstering economic self-sufficiency to improving public education and college graduation rates.